is true that the pithead price which is realised by the coal company forms a relatively smaller part of cost of coal to the consumer in non coal producing States. Apart from pithead price other elements in the cost of coal are royalty and taxes levied by State Governments and freight. While it is a fact that there is some measure of equalisation in the prices of Steel and Gas to the consumers in different parts of the country, similar arrangements in coal are not practical for the following reasons:—

(i) Coal is a bulk commodity of low value and therefore, freight is a major element in its cost which is not the case in respect of Steel and Gas.

(ii) Coal is produced in a large number of locations in different regions and the operation of freight equalisation scheme with so many producing centres and for a quantity of the order of around 150 to 200 million tonnes would pose insuperable difficulties.

(iii) A reight equalisation scheme in coal would, instead of solving the problem only transfer the disadvantage now experienced by consumer in non-coal producing States to consumer who are located near the coalfields.

Hunger strike by cafeteria workers of Visakhapatnam unit of HPCL

3685. SHRI K. G. MAHESWARAPPA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the workers employed in the cafeteria of the Visakhapatnam unit of the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited are on hunger strike since 25th July, 1988;

(b) if so, what are the grievances of these workers;

(c) whether 60 workmen have been suspended by the management while their dispute was being conciliated upon by the Assistant Labour Commissioner (Central);

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(e) whether Government propose to direct the HPCL to settle the demands of these workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) and (b) The workmen engaged in the night shift of the cafeteria at HPCL's Visakhapatnam refinery are engaged by a contractor and not by HPCL. This contract labour has resorted to relay hunger strike from July 25, 1988. The main grievances of the workers are enhancement of wages and allowances and permanent employment in the HPCL;

(c) and (d) Joint meetings had been held by the Assistant Labour Commissioner between the contractor and representatives of the workers. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited had attended as an observer only. The cafeteria contractor requested the management of HPCL to terminate the contract in view of the indiscipline and unruly attitude of the contract labour. The Corporation advised him to continue until alternative arrangements could be made. After making alternative arrangements, the contract was terminated on July 9, 1988. The contractor in turn terminated the services of his employees under clause 14(1) of sub-rule 25 of the Andhra Pradesh Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Rules, 1971.

(e) No, Sir. There is no such proposal under consideration of Government.

Comparative prices of Naphtha

3686. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of prices of naphtha from 1977 to 1988 year-wise;

(b) what are the corresponding prices in the international market; and

(c) whether there are any proposals to reduce the gap in naphtha prices in relation to international and indigenous price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) and (b) A statement is enclosed. (*See* below)

(c) There are no proposals at present to revise the price of Naphtha.

Statement

(a) The details of the ex-storage point prices of Naphtha from 1977 to 1988 are as follows:

RS./MT

	NAPHTHA	
	(Fertiliser Us)	(Non-Fertilizer Use)
From 16.12.77 . .	596.31	1012.00
,, 17.08.79	596,31	2482.00
" 8.06.80. . .	1071.31	2692.00
" 13.01.81 . .	1371.31	2792.00
" 11.07.81 . .	1723.31	2792.00
" 17.03.85 . .	1932.31	3211.00

The Prices shown above are exclusive of Excise duty which is levied according to end use.

(b) The yearly average Naphtha price in the Arab Gulf market on FOB basis for Paraffin Naphtha which corresponds to domestic naphtha are as follows:—

	$/MT
1978	130.53
1979	279.15
1980	301.48
1981	303.00
1982	282.75
1983	266.09
1984	238.55
1985	233.26
1986	116.96
1987	147.09
1988 (up to July '88) . .	135.75

Karnataka's Power projects pending with Central Government for clearance

3687. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of power projects from Karnataka are pending with the Central Government awaiting clearance;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the reasons for the delay in clearing the projects; and

(d) by when the projects are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) and (b) The status of the power projects from Karnataka which are pending examination and approval by Central Government agencies is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below)

(c) and (d) While all efforts are being made to expedite the clearance of the power projects, the approval of projects depends upon a number of factors such as the comprehensiveness of the project reports, expeditious response of the project authorities to the various comments/observations of the Central Electricity Authority/Central Water Commission, availability of various inputs and clearances and the relative priority accorded to the projects in terms of allocation of funds.